moment he will speak the same of Descaves. Next it is Charles Morice that he jeers at:

"He had come to see me in the country; the windows of my drawing, room opened on a wonderful panorama; the weather was fine; Morice was seated near the window; I saw him squinting, grimacing, closing his eyes. . . .

" 'Monsieur Morice, does the light bother you?*

"Then he, bursting out: *Oh, if it were only the light! But it's the landscape, Monsieur Mirbeau, the whole landscape! How can you fail to understand that the artist needs to be absorbed in his own thought; he withdraws within himself; he combines things and elaborates a work. Show him nature — and everything is shot! The artist! the artist ought to live in a house without windows!*"

Francis Jourdain, who arrives at this point, tells other tales about Morice, but he talks of him with much more finesse. Unfortunately we are picked up and carried along by this gust of exaggerated disparage-ment; Jourdain talks of Maillol and refuses to understand, or at least pretends not to understand, some of Maillol's remarks that he relates and that would be easy to explain; even I let myself laugh and tolerate without quite approving the massacre . . . and, besides, trying to make them understand would be so ridiculously useless. And what would be left to keep Mirbeau busy if he didn't lunge at everyone? That is his vocation and his primary occupation. He would fall flat if he didn't imagine himself surrounded by monsters.

Howbeit, I do not find him unattractive; quite the contrary, and con-tact with him is wanning. But nothing to be learned from him. Not even possible to get any precise information from him.

The more intelligent a humorist is, the less he needs to deform re-ality to make it significant.

6 January

I receive the same evening an effusive letter from Mardrus and an

effusive letter from Roy&re; a few days ago both of them were writing me insults.—Amazing incoherence of certain brains. This evening a mad letter from little Louis Rouart, who longs for my 'Vapid decomposition/' etc.

Tou must be very happy/ someone said to his wife, "to see him become so religious/*

"I! Why, I'm as sorry as I can be!** she exclaimed; "so long as he wasn't religious, I was able to count on religion to improve his character; now I have given up counting on anything/*

16 *January*

Copeau asks me to go with him to the Bibescos'; he is to be introduced to Chaumeix. I overcome my apprehension of the frightful bore